



Afternoon Alert - Wednesday, April 18, 2018

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HEADLINES

Noon news

Most networks gave top play to reports on the first day of the U.S.-Japan summit at Mar-a-Lago, highlighting President Trump's promise that he will raise the abduction issue when he meets with Kim Jong Un. Fuji TV led with a report that several foreign media outlets, including the Washington Post, have reported that CIA chief Pompeo secretly visited Pyongyang to meet with Kim Jong Un about two weeks ago.

INTERNATIONAL

President Trump accepts all of PM Abe's requests on North Korea

All networks reported at noon on the first day of the U.S.-Japan summit at Mar-a-Lago on Tuesday, during which President Trump agreed to raise the abduction issue when he meets with Kim Jong Un. NTV said the two leaders spent a lot of time discussing North Korea on the first day, reporting that according to a source accompanying the prime minister, the President leaned forward and looked straight into Prime Minister Abe's eyes when they talked about the abduction issue. The network said the President also reportedly said he will do his best for Japan, adding that he apparently accepted all of Abe's requests on North Korea on the first day. The network speculated, however, that the President is probably hoping to obtain concessions from Japan on trade, which will be discussed on the second day. The network claimed that although PM Abe is expected to ask the President to exempt Japan from the new tariffs on steel and aluminum imports, the President will probably ask Japan to reduce the U.S. trade deficit in return. The network quoted a source connected to the White House as saying: "The United States has a scenario in mind for urging Japan to enter FTA talks."

Suga comments on CIA chief Pompeo's secret meeting with Kim Jong Un

All networks reported on a U.S. media report that CIA Director Pompeo secretly visited North Korea

and met with Kim Jong Un about two weeks ago. NHK quoted Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga as telling reporters this morning: "Japan and the United States always work closely at all levels, including this summit, and share information. But I will refrain from commenting on diplomatic exchanges." Fuji TV said although it is unclear what they discussed, the meeting was apparently held for the purpose of laying the groundwork for the upcoming U.S.-DPRK summit. The network said it is extremely rare for a senior USG official who will soon be in charge of diplomatic policy to visit Pyongyang. Noting that President Trump told PM Abe on Tuesday that the U.S. and North Korea are "holding extremely high-level direct talks," the network said this demonstrates the Trump administration's strong enthusiasm for the U.S.-DPRK summit.

President Trump tweets that he doesn't like TPP

NHK reported on its website that President Trump tweeted that he is negative about the U.S. rejoining the TPP, quoting him as saying: "While Japan and South Korea would like us to go back into TPP, I don't like the deal for the United States." The network said the President also stressed that he will place priority on an FTA by saying that bilateral deals are more efficient and profitable for American workers. The network said the tweet was posted after the President's summit with Prime Minister Abe, speculating that the President was expressing his eagerness to enter FTA talks with Japan.

Senior USG officials comment on possibility of FTA talks with Japan

NHK reported online that Director of the National Economic Council Kudlow told reporters in Florida on Tuesday: "We have certain disagreements with respect to some of the trading issues.... The United States would probably like to see a free trade agreement come out at some point with Japan." The network interpreted this remark to mean that Washington is willing to hold FTA talks with Japan. Concerning the possibility of the Trump administration rejoining the TPP, the broadcaster quoted the economic advisor to the President as saying: "There's nothing at all concrete. It's too early to say.... It has to be in U.S. interest for us to take another look." In response to a question on whether the United States will exempt Japan from its steel tariffs, Kudlow reportedly said that the issue will probably be discussed at the summit but he would not speculate on the outcome of the meeting.

Concerning North Korea, NSC Senior Director for Asian Affairs Pottinger told reporters: "Prime Minister Abe and the President are going to want to exchange views in advance of a summit with the North Korean leader so that we make sure that Japanese interests and American interests are both fully accounted for."

- [Family of Japanese abductees hope U.S.-N. Korea summit brings reunion](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Trump promises to raise abduction in summit with N. Korea's Kim: Abe](#) (Kyodo News)

- [Interview with Daniel Russel: "Abe's counsel important for solving North Korean issues"](#) (Sankei)
- [Japan, China to hold maritime talks on April 19–20](#) (Nikkei)
- [Japan-China defense exchange program resumed after six years](#) (Mainichi)
- [Editorial: Japan, China must continue talks to truly improve bilateral relations](#) (The Japan News)
- [Russia to build hospital in Moscow using Japanese technology](#) (Kyodo News)
- [World Gardening Fair featuring gardens designed based on ideas of ambassadors and their spouses](#) (Sankei)

ECONOMY

- [Japan logs 2.46 tril. yen trade surplus in FY 2017 on strong exports](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Expert panel to recommend Japan use its environmental technology to resolve climate change issues](#) (Yomiuri)
- [LDP project team approves draft casino bills; Komeito team to follow suit](#) (Yomiuri)
- [TEPCO, Chubu Electric to invest 100 billion yen in U.S. power generation business](#) (Nikkei)
- [Economic ties with China still thorny / Intellectual property, steel remain problematic](#) (The Japan News)
- [Editorial: A U.S. return to the TPP must not weaken deal](#) (The Japan Times)
- [In race for 5G, China leads South Korea and U.S., study shows](#) (The Japan Times)
- [Centuries worth of rare earth elements found in Japan's EEZ](#) (The Asahi Shimbun)
- [More companies eyeing new grads, Yomiuri-NTV poll of 100 major companies](#) (The Japan News)

POLITICS

Issues with management of government documents

NHK's "Close-up Gendai +" reported on the issue in which the daily activity logs of the GSDF unit in Iraq were recently found and disclosed even though the Defense Ministry had repeatedly said that they did not exist. The program pointed out that awareness of the importance of managing government documents within the ministry and the SDF was low, even though the ministry had already been criticized for its sloppy management of the daily activity logs of troops in South Sudan. The program also said the orders sent via email to find the activity logs in Iraq were unclear, causing the internal investigation to be conducted only within certain divisions. Although the government has revised the guidelines for document management to require ministries to retain documents considered necessary to assess whether the correct decisions were made for more than one year, determining which documents need to be retained is a new challenge.

- [Prime minister's schedule on April 17, 2018](#) (Nikkei)
- [Abe, Suga deferring to Aso in handling vice finance minister's alleged sexual harassment](#) (Yomiuri)
- [DP discusses proposed basic policies for new party it plans to form with Party of Hope](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Hosoda and Aso factions confirm cooperation in fall election](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)

- [Special Advisor to the Cabinet Isao Iijima: “Abe should dissolve Lower House as soon as possible”](#) (Mainichi)

SCIENCE

- [Coral reefs in Wakayama Pref. on brink of death](#) (The Japan News)

EDUCATION

- [Expert concerned about private-sector English tests, urges gov’t to reconsider](#) (Nikkei)

SOCIETY

- [More Vietnamese trainees made to join Fukushima decontamination work](#) (Kyodo News)
- [UNESCO designates Izu Peninsula as global geopark](#) (Jiji Press)

SECURITY

- [SDF slated to have same cruise missiles as those used in Syria attack](#) (Mainichi)
- [Tokyo railway operators taking counterterrorism measures ahead of Olympics](#) (Nikkei, Evening edition)
- [Defense chief denies SDF’s Iraq activity logs contradict gov’t stance](#) (Kyodo News)

OKINAWA LOCAL PRESS

Support group confirms plan to endorse Onaga’s candidacy in next gubernatorial election

Ryukyu Shimpo wrote that a group of Okinawa prefectural assembly members, labor unions, and private firms supporting Governor Onaga reconfirmed on Tuesday their plan to support him as a candidate in the next gubernatorial election to be held in the fall. The group agreed to back Onaga as a candidate at their previous meeting in March, but reconfirmed the plan yesterday following the governor’s announcement last week that a tumor was discovered in his pancreas.